

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

SARAH PALIN, GOVERNOR

P.O. BOX 115526
JUNEAU, AK 99811-5526
PHONE: (907) 465-4100
FAX: (907) 465-2332

March 28, 2008

Bernhard Richert
Director, Alaska Field Office and
Economic Development Representative
Economic Development Administration
510 L Street, Suite 444
Anchorage, AK 99501

Dear Mr. Richert,

This letter is being written to you to provide comments on the OceansAlaska Research Float Plan proposal submitted to your office for an Economic Development Administrative matching grant. John Sund, OceansAlaska's OceansAlaska Development Director, has worked collaboratively with Alaska Department of Fish and Game management and Mariculture Program staff in the development of a strategic plan to help determine what research, development, and training is needed to increase the growth of shellfish mariculture in the state. Mr. Sund's expert leadership skills to guide the strategic planning process and bring wide range of stakeholders together has resulted in both a strategic plan that is not only beneficial for the OceansAlaska organization, but has provided a framework for the shellfish industry to prioritize their goals and objectives and work towards the collective growth an industry. The establishment of an OceansAlaska Board and Oceans Alaska Marine Science Council provides the organization with a solid foundation for directing the activities and is working to move the strategic plan forward.

Overall, the funding of this proposal will provide a basic floating field station facility for OceansAlaska's initial research and training programs. The development of a demonstration farm and training facility fits well into the shellfish industry's goal of finding solutions to obtain a consistent and adequate supply of healthy seed and brood stock to improve survivability from seed to harvest thereby increasing productivity and profits. Recent statistics on Alaska populations indicate there is attrition from southeast coastal communities due to a lack of viable jobs. This proposed training facility will provide field training to new entrants to the shellfish industry that has the potential to fill a growing gap in coastal communities by adding new job opportunities. Further training at this facility will provide these graduates with best management practices for farming that will add to the success of their businesses. The facility can also provide life history information of native species that is currently lacking.

ADF&G fully supports the efforts of the OceansAlaska organization as well as their grant proposal submitted to your agency. The funding for this project will greatly assist in the development of the mariculture industry and jobs associated with the facility. Please feel free to call the Mariculture Program Coordinator if you need more information at (907) 465-6150 or by email at cynthia.pringham@alaska.gov. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "David Bedford".

David Bedford,
Deputy Commissioner

cc

John Sund, OceansAlaska*

John Hilsinger, ADF&G*

Patricia Nelson, ADF&G*

Craig Farrington, ADF&G*

Ray Ralonde, Marine Advisory Program*

Rodger Painter, ASGA*

*Via email